

# **RAB Minutes**

## **NAS North Island**

### **Restoration Advisory Board**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The thirty-third Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting for Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island was held on Wednesday, February 19, 1997, in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Ms. Dottie Marron, RAB Community Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed RAB and community members.

#### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 16, 1997 RAB MEETING**

Ms. Kaupp asked why the full transcript from last month's meeting was not in the library. Mr. Arno Bernardo stated this would be looked into and remedied immediately. There were no comments on the minutes which were accepted as submitted.

#### **ORDNANCE EMERGENCY REMOVAL ACTION, EELGRASS MITIGATION SITE**

Ms. Kim Wheeler, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division (SWDIV) Remedial Project Manager, presented a status for the ordnance emergency removal action at the eelgrass mitigation site which included a review of background information, progress since last RAB briefing, planned actions, and expected completion date. [Hand-out provided]

Background: On November 25, 1996, during construction of shallow water habitat to mitigate for the loss of habitat from the CVN Homeporting Project, the Navy discovered some abandoned ordnance in the fill. To date, a total of 53 MK 3 barrage rocket heads were found originating from the mitigation area. An emergency removal was initiated because of: (1) the potential threat of fire/explosion, (2) potential exposure to nearby populations, animals, or food chains, and (3) potential contamination of sensitive ecosystems. Based on initial sampling, no soil contamination was detected. Cleanup crew is comprised of several specialized Navy contractors. A two-phased survey/screen cleanup technology was selected to safely remove all ordnance prior to excavation.

Progress Since Last RAB: The initial ordnance survey has been completed. To date, 194,000 cubic yards of soil have been excavated and 3 additional pieces of ordnance or fragments (all inert) have been discovered. The 53 rocket heads previously recovered have been detonated at an approved ordnance disposal range. Some of the rocket heads contained plaster of paris for a filler rather than TNT. The Navy hosted several site visits with the regulators and natural resource trustees including Mr. Charles Cheng, Regional Water Board (overseeing agency), who conducted some soil sampling. Results should be available at the March RAB. Finally, the Navy public noticed the availability of the Administrative Record (AR) and Action Memorandum in the Coronado Journal and San Diego Union on January 24, 1997, initiating a 30-day review period. The AR contains key documents on the cleanup including the Action Memo and work plans. Comments on the AR should be submitted to Mr. Bill Collins, SWDIV.

Planned Actions/Expected Completion Date: The cleanup team will conduct a final ordnance survey and continue screening prior to excavation. Upon completion of the removal, a closeout report and fact sheet will be prepared and submitted for a 30-day review. The expected completion date is May 1997 when it is

determined the potential threats no longer exist, excavation is complete, and recovered ordnance has been disposed or destroyed.

Discussion:

- Ms. Marron asked where the ordnance was found, and whether other areas would be examined. Ms. Wheeler said that several options are being considered and the Navy has not made a decision.
- Mr. Bludau inquired whether additional soils are being trucked into the area besides what has been dredged. Ms. Wheeler answered that dredged soil is going to the combined disposal facility or to the southern part of the island for the snowy plover/least tern mitigation area. No additional soil is being imported from off the base nor is leaving the base.
- Mr. Crawford asked whether a reason has been found for the ordnance being there. Ms. Wheeler said the Navy does not have any records indicating the reason.
- Ms. Gill queried about the ordnance being in crates, stacked one on top of the other. Ms. Wheeler confirmed that some of the rocket heads were found stacked in crates which leads you to believe that they were placed there rather than dumped.
- Mr. Dyer inquired why it wasn't publicly announced earlier, during 1996. Ms. Wheeler responded that the cleanup team briefed the RAB as soon as they got a handle on things. Furthermore, the Navy notified all of the key regulators as required by law.

**SITE 1 RI/RFI STATUS**

Ms. Kim Wheeler, SWDIV Remedial Project Manager, presented a status of the Site 1 Remedial Investigation/RCRA Facility Investigation (RI/RFI) which included an introduction, study design overview, conclusions/recommendations, and overview of report organization. The last project status was provided at the August 1996 RAB Meeting. [Hand-out provided]

Introduction: NAS North has 12 Installation Restoration (IR) Sites. Site 1 was identified in 1983 as an IR site because of potential environmental impacts posed by historic stormwater runoff containing hazardous wastes. Sediments of concern are located adjacent to the 16 original stormwater outfall pipes surrounding the island. Sediments associated with outfalls 9-15 are the subject of a time critical removal action and were therefore not included in this investigation.

The purpose of the investigation is to evaluate potential contamination and toxicity for the purposes of assessing human health and ecological risk and determining future actions. In addition to the RAB and the Navy, several key federal, state, and local regulators have actively participated in the project team. The investigation began in the early 1990s with the work plan development. In April 1996, a project kickoff meeting was held. During this past summer, the team conducted sampling, analysis, and data validation. In October 1996, the team met for a risk decision meeting to review the preliminary results and solicit feedback in preparation of the draft RI/RFI report. The report is now ready for a 60-day review. Three copies are provided in the information repository.

Study Design Overview: The study consisted of three types of measurements: physical, chemical, and biological from Site 1 and ten distinct "clean" reference stations in San Diego Bay. The results of Site 1 sediments were then compared to the "clean" reference stations. A table in the hand-out provides a list of the measurements and rationale.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Regarding ecological risk, no "hot spots" of chemical contamination, toxicity or bioaccumulation were found in Site 1 sediments. A few individual stations (within an outfall area) contained chemicals that were statistically higher than the reference station. However, all chemical levels were below national sediment quality screening guidelines developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Regarding human health risk, using the most conservative residential scenario, heavy metals at the ocean outfalls posed potential non-cancer risks. However, had a

more realistic industrial scenario been applied, the shoreline sediments would pose no potential human health risk. Finally, for the subsurface cores, most chemicals detected at the surface decreased at depth. All of the chemicals were below the NOAA guidelines. *Based on the findings of the RI/RFI, the sediments do not pose a human health or ecological risk and therefore "No Further Action" is recommended.*

Overview of Report Organization: The draft RI/RFI report documenting the results and conclusions of the investigation consists of three volumes. Volume 1 contains the key information including an introduction, detailed description of study design, results of physical, chemical, and biological measurements, and risk assessment. Volumes 2 and 3 are supporting information. Three complete copies of the report are provided in the information repository for the duration of the 60-day review. A copy of the Executive Summary was provided to the RAB members.

#### Discussion:

- Ms. Dyer asked why industrial standards were being used. Ms. Wheeler explained that the residential scenario is most conservative and unrealistic for the site since it assumes that someone resides on the sediments and eats them every day for 70 years.
- Ms. Kaupp queried why fish as a species were not studied. Ms. Wheeler responded that fish migrate, often as far as Tijuana to San Diego and do not feed from any one area surrounding NAS North Island at a particular outfall area. Therefore, results of fish studies cannot be correlated to any individual source. Instead, the Navy conducted a focused ecological risk assessment on the creatures living in the sediment as an indication of what is being transported up the food chain. Dr. Ken Richter, NRD, further explained why fish could not be studied.
- Ms. Gill expressed confusion about the "clean" reference stations used to compare the outfall sediments to. Ms. Wheeler, with elaboration by Dr. Richter, explained that 102 sites were selected from the Water Board's San Diego Bay Protection and Toxic Cleanup Program. Two criteria were used to select "clean" sites from the 102 candidates: (1) the chemical concentration must be less than the NOAA effects range-median value and (2) the toxicity must be greater than 75% survival in the bioassay tests.
- Ms. Field asked for clarification on why the results from the clean reference sites were disregarded in favor of the national database. Ms. Wheeler explained that the results were compared to the national database to get a more global perspective. Furthermore, if the Site 1 sediment contaminant levels were greater than the clean reference sites, the team looked at the toxicity and bioaccumulation results to see if there was an exceedance. An elevated chemical does not necessarily pose an ecological risk.
- Mr. Kaupp inquired about the core samples - how they compared to samples taken in 1980. Dr. Richter said that titanium increased with depth while everything else seemed to decrease with depth. Mr. Kaupp also asked about whether any of the organisms were tested in larval stage. Ms. Wheeler stated that the bivalves, the oysters, were a larval stage test.
- Mr. McCauley asked about silver levels. Dr. Richter replied that the range was 0.2 to 0.7 ppm in the tissue of the tested organisms. A literature search showed levels of 7-40 ppm in tissue as an average for harbors and estuaries up the west coast.
- Ms. Gill asked where the testing was done. Ms. Wheeler responded that the tests were done at a bioassay lab in Carlsbad.

#### **SITE 9 STATUS UPDATE**

Ms. Kim Wheeler, SWDIV Remedial Project Manager, presented the update for Bill Collins which included a review of the status of the Site 9 RI/RFI investigation and the future plans to complete the evaluation of the environmental impacts of Site 9 groundwater on the San Diego Bay.

Background: Comments were received on the Addendum to the Draft RI/RFI report dated April 1996 which included concerns regarding the ecological risk posed by groundwater contaminants migrating

toward San Diego Bay. The team, including members of the RAB, regulators, special interest groups, the Navy, and contractors, met on November 7, 1996, to review existing data and determine future action for development of a work plan. The problem statement was defined to be: "Does the contaminated groundwater interfere with the sediment porewater and therefore cause an adverse impact to the San Diego Bay ecosystem?" The team decided on a phased approach to answer this question. There are a number of wells installed along the shoreline. The initial plan is to add 6 new wells - a cluster of 5 to the south and one additional well in the middle cluster. Next, each well is to be sampled. Then, the plan is to focus offshore by sampling the porewater (water in between sediments). If the groundwater is impacting the Bay, it's coming up through the porewater. If there is impact to the porewater, three new groundwater monitoring wells will be installed off shore using an innovative design for these groundwater wells proposed by DTSC. If those groundwater wells show a problem, an innovative technology called a benthic flux meter will be used to measure the rate of potential contaminants flowing out of the porewater into the sediment.

Current status: The work plan is under final preparation and there will be a 30-day regulatory/RAB review expected to begin late February.

#### Discussion:

- Ms. Kaupp asked where this site was in relation to the fuel pipelines to Point Loma. Ms. Wheeler informed her the pipelines are further north. Ms. Kaupp also asked if there were any problems with the water quality around the pipelines. Mr. Mach replied that he was not aware of any leakage. He described a pipeline test which was conducted last summer using two types of "pigs" - one cleans the pipe, the second is a "smart pig" and analyzes the thickness of the pipe. There has been no indication of a leak from that test nor any impacted soil encountered during excavation in the area.
- Ms. Gill and Ms. Field asked where Site 9 was in the cleanup process and if it was still at the information gathering stage. Ms. Wheeler replied that the Site is still in the investigation stage.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (TAPP)

Mr. Arno Bernardo, RAB Navy Co-Chair, presented the status of TAPP. The National Defense Authorization Act of 1996 allows DOD to provide funding for public participation on Installation Restoration activities. The intent of TAPP is to provide funding support to assist communities in understanding technical issues.

Status: DOD is seeking final comments on the proposed options for implementation of a TAPP plan. Comments are due by February 25, 1997. Mr. Bernardo inquired whether the community had seen the proposal and Ms. Marron answered that it was brought up months ago and that she had commented on the notice in the Federal Register. The proposal outlines three options for providing technical assistance. Mr. Bernardo explained that the option chosen based on the draft proposal and comments received (about 45 responses) was to have DOD issue purchase orders to the community groups. These purchase orders will be managed by the Activity Commanding Officer, which for this RAB is NAS North Island.

Plan Outline: The program has a limited budget. It is subject to monetary limits per order and per RAB as a total. The total funds provided for an organization should not exceed \$100,000 and the funds allocated per year should be the lesser of \$25,000 or 1% of the total projected costs of the IR program for that year. There is an exception to this rule whereby the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security may waive \$100,000 total and \$25,000/year limit depending on the complexity of the site, total need (all of DOD), and the ability to identify and raise funds from other sources. The RAB Community Co-

Chair submits a TAPP application to activity commander and contracting office specifying the type of assistance and possible service providers with specific qualifications. The RAB must also demonstrate that the regulatory agencies do not have required expertise. The station then advertises the required service and awards a purchase order (contract) to the low bidder.

#### Discussion:

- Ms. Marron requested Mr. Bernardo e-mail her a copy of his presentation. She mentioned that the RAB already has a connection with Technical Outreach Services to Communities (TOSC), with Ken Williamson from the University of Oregon and several scientists working with him. She said you have to be very specific when requesting TOSC help. If anyone has technical questions about Site 9 and 11, let Ms. Marron know. Mr. Williamson was helpful at a previous RAB meeting when dealing with issues related to Site 4.
- Ms. Mingay pointed out that she brought 20 copies of the proposed rule and left them on the back table. When asked whether DTSC was commenting, she replied that DTSC had commented on the draft proposal, but was not aware of a plan to comment on this final proposal.
- Ms. Gill inquired how TAPP relates to ongoing site cleanup. Ms. Marron replied that when this program goes into effect, it will give the RAB members an opportunity to seek outside technical assistance in cases where it does not want to rely on the military as the one source of information.

## **NAS NORTH ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD**

Mr. Mike MaGee, NAS North Island IR Manager, described the annual environmental award cycle. In November of 1996, NAS North Island applied for the Installation Restoration/cleanup award. There are also awards for pollution prevention, recycling and several other categories. NAS North Island was chosen to have the best IR program at the CINCPACFLT level. Then the package was sent to CNO to compete with the rest of the Navy. NAS North Island won while the Naval Air Engineering Station in Lakehurst, New Jersey, and the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard were runners-up. The revised nomination package being sent to the Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of Defense (available as a handout) to be considered for another Environmental Clean-up Installation Award. The credit for these awards and accomplishment goes to the whole team. The RAB has played a major role in the clean up of NAS North Island over the past two years.

## **SANDOR KAUPP INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Kaupp gave a description of his background and perspective. He comes from a scientific background. Mr. Kaupp worked at Scripps Institute of Oceanography until 3 years ago when he went to work for the Naval Health Research Center working in human physiology. He has come full circle from working on environmental matters to working on marine biology to working with humans and has a broad technical perspective. He is a Coronado resident and cares about his "backyard". Mr. Kaupp stated that NAS North Island currently produces about 1% of California's toxic waste which is a concern of his. He stated that all RAB members are concerned about the Navy, but, to its credit, NAS North Island is doing a great job. As a final note, Mr. Kaupp said the RAB will continue to be critical from time to time.

#### **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Ms. Ewen introduced Ken Moser - Director of San Diego Baykeeper. Mr. Moser came to San Diego after starting the Puget Soundkeeper program. He described his organization as a citizens group, a national alliance of 18 baykeepers. They are currently working very hard on stormwater pollution problems and have a suit with CalTrans for their construction sites, their maintenance facilities and other activities, and also with the Port District, NASSCO, Campbell Shipyard, Southwest Marine and the County of San Diego.

Their telephone number is 1-800 HELPBAY.

Mr. Mach described two handouts he brought. One is a document summary list, the other is a list of acronyms used by the military and in the environmental field.

Ms. Mingay offered congratulations to Kim Wheeler for condensing three technical presentations into an understandable presentation and doing a great job.

Dates were chosen for the next two RAB meetings - Wednesday, March 12th and Thursday April 17th.

Ms. Marron asked for agenda items for March. Mr. Mach said he could present the status update of Sites 4, 6 and 10 as well as Sites 9 and 11. Ms. Wheeler volunteered to present the radiation shoreline slag area.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.